

Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services

Notes September 14, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Dowd, Chera Gerstein, Ann Gionet, Tesha Imperati, Jay Kearns, David Daniel Klipper, Sara Lourie, James Loomis, Sara Reed, Nikki Richer, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Stan Soby, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Catherine Abercrombie, Nancy Bagatell, Ruth Eren, Jan Galloway, Jacqueline Kelleher, Kathy Marchione, Yana Razumnaya, Jennifer Ureta,

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Siobhan Morgan, Lori Conchado

GUESTS: Commissioner Terrence Macy, Tom Zwicker and George O'Loughlin of Easter Seals CT, Michelle Sideleau-Wendt

No Public Comment

Approval of May Minutes – Stan Soby moved to accept; Barbara Sallop seconded. Minutes were approved

HRSA Grant: Ann Gionet joined the meeting via telephone to advise the council that the Health Resources Service Administration granted The Department of Public Health (DPH) \$55,000 to improve the access to comprehensive health care for children and youth with an ASD. DPH and the A.J. Pappanikou Center will be the key players in its implementation. The council and individual members may be called upon to view work plans and updates and provide feedback.

Proposed Changes to By-laws: Chera led a discussion of how to treat member absences and suggested changes to the approval of new members. The current process for new members, which was proposed by the Nominations Committee, is for individuals to submit a resume and application to be reviewed by the Committee and that the individual attend a meeting prior to having members vote. Lois feels there should be a special exception in regard to participants being required to attend a meeting prior to a vote. The Nominations Committee will draft language for review by the Executive Committee. Stan confirmed that there must be 30 days notice prior to a vote on any change and that the vote may be done electronically.

Commissioner Terrence H. Macy: Commissioner Macy was introduced to council members, provided a brief bio of his background and assured the group that he is interested in supporting the council and attending meetings. Commissioner met with a small group of council members in July and provided notes from this meeting.

Discussion of hiring freeze/refill positions: The refilling of Kathy Reddington's vacancy is a priority. OPM must approve the refill for the position. The position will be filled by utilizing the DAS classifications to identify a position that best fits the programs need. It will then be posted and individuals will be interviewed. Lois inquired whether there is room for members to provide input and participate in recommending a replacement.

Status of Medicaid Waivers: The Autism Waivers were informally submitted to CMS, who came back with complex questions regarding the roles of each state agency. DDS, DSS and DMHAS fiscal representatives are meeting to develop a coordinated response to their questions. Lois asked that a point person be identified for Co-chairs to contact regarding questions on the waiver. Commissioner Macy stated he is willing to serve as the point person. It is anticipated that responses will be completed and the application will be formally submitted to CMS by the end of September. DSS expects that CMS will take the full 90 days to review materials and we are hopeful that this will permit a start date before April 2012. Clients in the DDS pilot program may be the first to be enrolled on the waiver. Chera expressed concern that current pilot program consumers will bear the impact of changes due to the transition to a waiver program. Judy clarified that these waivers were designed to incorporate the services that individuals are already receiving so placement on a waiver should be relatively seamless to clients.

5 Year Plan: Jim Loomis believes it is important to structure how individuals are determined eligible for the waivers and referred to the appropriate state agency. The following were identified through brainstorming: The pilot program has does well with its individualized services; we need to be aware of the ebb/flow of consumers needs for services; there should be more outreach to families; training of staff is imperative. Lois believes we are in a crisis regarding providers and that funding is necessary to provide training to staff on working with individuals on the spectrum. Chera inquired about possible state resources for funding. It was suggested that funding be considered in the private sector due to fiscal constraints.

There was a discussion on the changes in the format for monthly clinical reviews. In the past, the division had a panel of 5 individuals reviewing 3 -5 cases per day. Kathy changed the format in anticipation of the waivers to include 2 individuals reviewing approximately 12 cases per day. Jim believes the new format is different, but effective. It was suggested that BRS and parents be included in future reviews. Siobhan is meeting with Jim and staff to discuss how to proceed for future reviews.

Commissioner Macy has feedback from families that the department is confusing. He would like to create a “front door” for families on the DDS website and is meeting with staff on its development.

Next meeting: November 9th. This meeting will be David Daniel’s last as a Co-chair. If you are interested in becoming a Co-chair or would like to make a recommendation, please forward this info to Lori at: (lori.conchado@ct.gov) who will share it with the Nominations Committee.

Chera will invite Barbara Geller and Marty Legault to the November meeting to discuss housing issues. If you have any questions regarding housing issues, please e-mail them to Chera at: (chera.gerstein@willis.com).

Jonathan offered to develop a calendar of meetings for 2012 to be sent to David Daniel for review.